

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 14, 15, 17-19 and 21 are now present in this application.

The specification and claims 1, 10 and 14 have been amended, claims 13, 16 and 20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 21 has been presented. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Declaration

The Declaration stands objected to for not indicating the citizenship of each inventor. Accordingly, submitted concurrently herewith is an executed Supplemental Declaration. Reconsideration and withdrawal of any objection to the Declaration are therefore respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 USC 102(e)

Claims 10-12, 14, 15, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by OOISHI et al., U.S. Patent 6,545,926. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully submitted that the limitations of objected-to but allowable claim 13 have been incorporated into independent claim 10. Accordingly, independent claim 10 and its dependent claims 11 and 12 should now be in condition for allowance.

It is also noted that claim 14 has been amended to be in independent form, including the limitations of objected-to but allowable claim 20. Accordingly, independent claim 14 and its dependent claims 15 and 17-19 should now be in condition for allowance.

With regard to newly presented independent claim 21, it is noted that this claim includes limitations from objected-to but allowable claim 16, and should therefore also be in condition for allowance.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Examiner considers claims 1-9 to be allowable, and claims 13, 16, 19 and 20 to contain allowable subject matter. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims should now be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(e) rejection are respectfully requested.

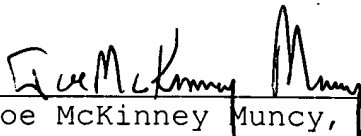
Because the additional prior art cited by the Examiner has been included merely to show the state of the prior art and has not been utilized to reject the claims, no further comments concerning these documents are considered necessary at this time.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Supplemental Declaration

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